



Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches

23 July 2020 – 14:00 to 17:00

Virtual Open Meeting

Rapporteur's Summary

Item 1 - Introduction by the Rapporteur and presentation of the policy recommendations on Agroecological and other Innovative Approaches (Draft One)

The virtual meeting was opened by the Rapporteur, Ambassador Emadi (Iran), who recalled the overall objective of the CFS workstream on Agroecological and Other Innovative Approaches and presented Draft One of the policy recommendations. He noted that agroecological and other innovative approaches are crucial for the transformation of food systems to achieve food security and nutrition, and that the CFS policy recommendations represent a contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the upcoming Food Systems Summit in 2021.

The Rapporteur:

- explained that the objective of the open meeting was to present and discuss Draft One and noted that there are still very strong and opposed opinions among the stakeholders regarding agroecological and other innovative approaches; guided by the wish to have a starting point which can arrive at a final negotiated text which is meaningful, Draft One tries to focus on solutions, but it does not avoid all the controversial issues;
- clarified that there will not be a further draft and that the objective of the open meeting was therefore not to gather stakeholders' inputs to revise the draft, but to give all stakeholders the opportunity to hear the positions of others in order to prepare for the negotiations;
- reminded that the spirit of constructive dialogue and the three principles of this policy convergence process – inclusiveness, transparency, meaningfulness – will continue to guide the next phase of the process.

Item 2 - Exchange of feedback by CFS stakeholders

Stakeholders thanked the Rapporteur, Secretariat and Technical Focal Points for the quality of Draft One and several Members underlined that the draft was a solid basis for the upcoming policy negotiations, and that it integrated a large number of points raised by stakeholders in the policy convergence process thus far. Among several other points that were mentioned, stakeholders appreciated the emphasis on context-specific approaches, the insistence on the importance of all three pillars of sustainability, the greater emphasis given to human rights, and the inclusion of Annex 1 with definitions of key terms.

Numerous stakeholders stressed that the views they shared during the open meeting were preliminary as they were still waiting for feedback from capitals, and release of other language versions. The majority of stakeholders said that they would provide comments in writing by September 15.

Numerous stakeholders requested clarity on the next steps in the policy convergence process in the context of the delayed negotiations due to COVID-19. It was highlighted that inclusiveness should not be compromised due to the impact of COVID-19 on the negotiation process and modalities. Furthermore, the possibility of holding another open meeting in the fall was mentioned.

The following points aim to capture the open floor discussion on Draft One. Specific comments/questions are addressed in writing by the Rapporteur in the Annex.

- There were divergent views on whether Draft One was well balanced between agroecological and other innovative approaches in line with the request of the CFS to HLPE. There were several requests to expand the list of innovative approaches, but also a word of caution against confusing “innovations” with “innovative approaches”.
- There was concern that the preamble suggests that most technological innovations generate negative externalities, and that this may discourage investments into innovative approaches other than agroecological ones.
- Some stakeholders welcomed the references to the need for transformation and transition pathways, while another group felt that Draft One did not go far enough in calling for radical transformation, and a third group felt that wording should be adjusted to reflect the considerations of recent FAO Programme Committee and Council meetings.
- Regarding factoring externalities into prices, there was a suggestion to underline that all three pillars of sustainability should be considered equally and that trade-offs between them should be considered.
- It was suggested to evaluate the policy recommendations related to markets in the context of multilateral trade rules and to integrate key points from informal discussion 5 on markets.
- It was proposed that the performance metrics mentioned in recommendation 2 must be appropriate to specific contexts.
- Some stakeholders felt that there is no clarity on the methodology of the ecological footprint, and this would need to be defined at the multilateral level.
- There was a suggestion to add a paragraph on the non-binding and voluntary nature of the policy recommendations (see draft Voluntary Guidelines on Nutrition for Food Systems for suggested text);
- It was suggested that the policy recommendations should not duplicate the FAO TAPE tool and the CFS workstream on data;
- It was suggested that references to incentives should be accompanied by references to the need to avoid trade distorting public policies and trade barriers;
- Some stakeholders said that agroecological and other innovative approaches should serve to democratize access to food and to decentralize production – especially for the poorest areas of the world;
- Some stakeholders called for additional text to explain that innovative approaches are not mutually exclusive, while others stressed that agroecology cannot co-exist with unsustainable practices.

- It was proposed to include a reference to the 13 principles of agroecology of the HLPE report and include definition of agroecology in the Annex.
- Some stakeholders felt that the recommendations on agrochemicals went beyond the HLPE report and stressed that the use of agrochemicals should be optimized;
- There were several suggestions on antimicrobial resistance: a) check consistency with the Voluntary Guidelines on Nutrition for Food Systems; b) both CFS processes should recommend to “phase out the use of antimicrobials for growth promotion” rather than referring to “responsible use”; and, c) refer to Codex risk analysis guidelines.
- Clarity was requested on the model framework recommended in paragraph 2.a) of Draft 1 and how it is seen in concrete terms (in writing);
- It was suggested to provide greater precision and clarity on who is addressed in each of the recommendations (blocks of recommendations are addressed to numerous stakeholders whereas specific recommendations should be addressed to specific stakeholders in some cases);
- Some stakeholders felt that agreed UN language should be used, especially in areas not directly under the mandate of CFS, e.g. the recommendation that mentions gender violence and sexism is not accurately referenced;
- Some stakeholders stressed the need to have a clear reference to **all** positive and negative externalities of the various food systems.
- It was suggested that both the process and the policy recommendations should be people-centred and planet-sensitive.
- Some stakeholders reiterated that while the economic pillar of sustainability is important, economic viability or profitability is largely determined by the subsidies and policy incentives; include a reference to True Cost Accounting.
- It was suggested to update the figures on food insecurity based on the recently published SOFI 2020.
- It was suggested to emphasize the need for youth entrepreneurship.
- It was suggested to make specific mention of women’s rights, worker’s rights and the collective rights of indigenous peoples;
- Some stakeholders felt that specific policy recommendations on COVID-19 were missing.
- It was suggested to shorten the length of the preamble.
- It was suggested to integrate the Annex into the main body of the text.

Item 3 - Wrap-up and closing remarks by the Rapporteur

The Rapporteur:

- thanked all participants for their constructive feedback and confirmed that he will provide a written response to all comments received during the open meeting to provide clarity and ensure transparency of the process;
- encouraged written statements/inputs on Draft One to be shared by September 15th;
- informed that all comments will be posted on the CFS working space and categorized through a clustering matrix, which will inform the final negotiation process;
- recalled that the negotiations will hopefully take place before CFS 47 on the basis of the timing decided by the Bureau in consultation with the Advisory Group;
- welcomed the suggestion to hold another open meeting prior to the negotiations.

ANNEX

Rapporteur's written response to stakeholder comments during Open Meeting on 23 July 2020

Following the release of Draft One of the CFS policy recommendations on *agroecological and other innovative approaches for sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition* on July 15 2020, an open meeting was held virtually on July 23 to allow CFS stakeholders to share their initial views. Given that feedback from capitals, and language versions were not yet available, comments were limited and preliminary.

This note, prepared by the Rapporteur with support of the CFS Secretariat, seeks to respond to stakeholder comments in a transparent manner. In doing so, it may help stakeholders to avoid repeating points that have already been raised when they develop their written comments by September 15.

CFS stakeholders are reminded that no new draft is foreseen. In this context, the open meeting aimed to support the final negotiation process by helping stakeholders understand each other's positions.

Comments and Rapporteur's response

The stakeholder comments below are those that appear in the summary of the open meeting. They are listed below, with points that were mentioned by more than one stakeholder appearing higher up in the list.

1) *There were divergent views on whether Draft One achieved an appropriate balance between agroecological and other innovative approaches in line with the request of the CFS to HLPE. There were several requests to expand the list of innovative approaches, but also a word of caution against confusing "innovations" with "innovative approaches".*

- The lack of agreement on the question of balance in Draft 1 fully reflects the ongoing controversies and different points of view among stakeholders. In order to maintain trust and transparency in the context of discussing a controversial issue, any judgement about the appropriate balance between agroecological approaches and other innovative approaches must be made based on the original request from the CFS to the HLPE, as well as the findings of the HLPE report.
- CFS policy recommendations are based on HLPE reports. The HLPE undertakes a considerable effort to analyze the relevant evidence in a transparent manner. In this case, the request from the CFS to the HLPE¹ was challenging in its breadth. It is important to remember that the emphasis on agroecological approaches is clearly a part of the request from the CFS: *"Although particular attention to agroecological approaches is envisaged in the HLPE report, the Committee recognizes that there is no single practice for achieving food security and nutrition and sustainable and resilient food systems. The role of agroecological and other innovative approaches, practices and technologies in adapting existing knowledge and practices to specific conditions should be elaborated"*.

¹ [CFS 44 Multi-Year Programme of Work \(MYPoW\) \(paragraphs G 54-62\)](#)

- The distinction between “innovations” and “innovative approaches” is very important, and is addressed at length in the HLPE report, as well as in paragraphs 9 and 10 and the Annex of Draft One. Innovative approaches give rise to myriad innovations, technologies and practices.
 - The CFS did not request an inventory of all practices and technologies and it is understandable that the HLPE has not produced one. The HLPE has, however, included context-specific examples of practices and technologies which are given in boxes throughout the report.
 - As requested, the HLPE looked at what sort of technologies and practices arise from different approaches to innovation. Innovation is a process resulting in people doing things differently, that both utilizes existing and gives rise to new technology and practice. Approaches, technologies and practices are thus related. Given the global scope of the report the HLPE characterized approaches by the principles they involve (and this determines the technologies and practices they utilize), thereby addressing all three.
 - The policy recommendations on agroecological and other innovative approaches are based on the HLPE report, which identifies and analyzes nine innovative approaches (see paragraph 10 of Draft One). Expanding beyond these innovative approaches would not be advisable as stakeholders may not agree on the evidence base.
- 2) *Some stakeholders reiterated that while the economic pillar of sustainability is important, economic viability or profitability is largely determined by the subsidies and policy incentives; include a reference to True Cost Accounting.*
- This point is referred to in paragraph 11. Furthermore, Recommendation 1. f) calls to “re-direct public policies, budgets and incentives from innovations and practices that lead to negative externalities to those that reduce externalities while contributing to multiple sustainability goals” and Recommendation 1. g) calls for “factoring environmental, social and public health externalities into prices.” Any changes to the text would have to be discussed and agreed during the policy negotiation process.
- 3) *It was suggested that references to incentives should be accompanied by references to the need to avoid trade distorting public policies and trade barriers;*
- This proposal would have to be discussed during the policy negotiation process.
- 4) *It was proposed to include a reference to the 13 principles of agroecology of the HLPE report and include a definition of agroecology in the Annex.*
- During the informal discussions, there was a request not to confuse readers by referring to numerous different sets of principles. Draft One refers to the HLPE’s transition principles because they would apply to all innovative approaches and not just agroecological ones. Any further changes to the text will have to be discussed and agreed during the policy negotiations.
- 5) *Some stakeholders called for additional text to explain that innovative approaches are not mutually exclusive, while others stressed that agroecology cannot co-exist with unsustainable practices.*
- Clearly there are divergent views; any changes to the text will have to be discussed and finalized during the policy negotiation process.

- 6) *There was concern that the preamble suggests that most technological innovations generate negative externalities, and that this may discourage investments into innovative approaches other than agroecological ones.*
- Technological innovations are necessary for sustainable food systems that enhance food security and nutrition. Neither the HLPE report nor Draft One suggest in any way that they are not. Draft One does, however, refer to the HLPE report's findings by stating "Many technological innovations – despite having some positive impacts when assessed on single criteria – have generated significant negative externalities" (paragraph 12). The sentence that follows makes it clear that the aim is to learn the lessons of the past by taking steps to ensure that technological innovations that generate significant negative externalities avoid doing so in the future ("Thus going forward innovation in agriculture and food systems must address major social and environmental challenges simultaneously by being scrutinized against the criteria of sustainability."). Investment in any technological innovations that respond to all criteria of sustainability would be supported by these policy recommendations.
- 7) *Some stakeholders welcomed the references to the need for transformation and transition pathways, while another group felt that Draft One did not go far enough in calling for radical transformation, and a third group felt that wording should be adjusted to reflect the considerations of recent FAO Programme Committee and Council meetings.*
- Clearly there are divergent views; any changes to the text will have to be discussed and finalized during the policy negotiation process.
- 8) *Regarding factoring externalities into prices, there was a suggestion to underline that all three pillars of sustainability should be considered equally and that trade-offs between them should be considered.*
- There are numerous references to the need to respect all three pillars of sustainability throughout Draft 1. How to address trade-offs is an important but complex topic which would benefit from further attention by the CFS and HLPE.
- 9) *It was suggested to evaluate the policy recommendations related to markets in the context of multilateral trade rules and to integrate key points from informal discussion 5 on markets.*
- These proposals would have to be discussed during the policy negotiation process.
- 10) *It was proposed that the performance metrics mentioned in recommendation 2 must be appropriate to specific contexts.*
- Recommendation 2 proposes a process for the development of a model framework, including metrics, rather than advocating for specific metrics at this time, therefore any suggestions for points to be taken into account during the proposed process could be discussed and potentially added to the final text during the policy negotiation process.
- 11) *Some stakeholders felt that there is no clarity on the methodology of the ecological footprint, and this would need to be defined at the multilateral level.*
- Recommendation 2.c) recognizes that the calculation methods for ecological footprint need to be further refined (as noted in the HLPE report). Whether or not methodologies

have to be defined and agreed multilaterally is a topic to be discussed during the final negotiation process.

12) *There was a suggestion to add a paragraph on the non-binding and voluntary nature of the policy recommendations (see draft Voluntary Guidelines on Nutrition for Food Systems for suggested text);*

- As there will be no further draft of the policy recommendations, this suggestion could be discussed during the final negotiation process. It should be considered that Voluntary Guidelines and policy recommendations are different instruments.

13) *It was suggested that the policy recommendations should not duplicate the FAO TAPE tool and the CFS workstream on data;*

- The FAO TAPE tool focuses on evaluating the performance of agroecology, whereas Recommendation 2. a) proposes to evaluate the performance of food and agriculture systems. Certainly the TAPE tool will be a useful input to this process, which can build on the tool without duplicating it.
- The policy recommendations will not duplicate the CFS workstream on data, but seek to enhance and contribute to this workstream (recommendation 2.e) and 2.f)).

14) *Some stakeholders said that agroecological and other innovative approaches should serve to democratize access to food and to decentralize production – especially for the poorest areas of the world;*

- Recommendation 1.c) specifies the criteria that agroecological and other innovative approaches should meet. Any additional proposals would have to be discussed during the policy negotiation process.

15) *Some stakeholders felt that the recommendations on agrochemicals went beyond the HLPE report and stressed that the use of agrochemicals should be optimized;*

- Recommendation 3.g) refers to optimizing the use of pesticides, but distinguishes between short-term and long-term objectives, as suggested by several stakeholders during the informal discussion on agrochemicals.

16) *There were several suggestions on antimicrobial resistance: a) check consistency with the Voluntary Guidelines on Nutrition for Food Systems; b) both CFS processes should recommend to “phase out the use of antimicrobials for growth promotion” rather than referring to “responsible use”; and, c) refer to Codex risk analysis guidelines.*

- a) the draft Voluntary Guidelines focus on antimicrobial use as a food safety issue, whereas Draft One of the policy recommendations emphasize their impact on not only human, but also animal and environmental health.
- b) Recommendation 3.j) does refer to phasing out the use of antimicrobials as growth promoters.
- c) This proposal would have to be discussed and agreed during the policy negotiation process.

- 17) *Clarity was requested on the model framework recommended in paragraph 2.a) of Draft 1 and how it is seen in concrete terms (in writing);*
- The need for developing appropriate performance measures and monitoring frameworks is discussed at length in the HLPE report (Section 4.1). Recommendation 2.a) does not propose a framework, but a process to develop a framework.
- 18) *It was suggested to provide greater precision and clarity on who is addressed in each of the recommendations (blocks of recommendations are addressed to numerous stakeholders whereas specific recommendations should be addressed to specific stakeholders in some cases);*
- This would require a restructuring of the recommendations, which could be considered during the negotiation process.
- 19) *Some stakeholders felt that agreed UN language should be used, especially in areas not directly under the mandate of CFS, e.g. the recommendation that mentions gender violence and sexism is not accurately referenced;*
- Paragraph 1. l) is not – and does not pretend to be – a direct quote from the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), or its General Recommendation 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women. Nevertheless, General recommendation 34 does recommend preventing and eliminating all forms of violence against rural women and girls (paragraph 25). Article 1 of CEDAW defines “discrimination against women” as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex.” Such discrimination can therefore also be referred to as sexism. Any changes to the text can be discussed during the negotiation process.
- 20) *Some stakeholders stressed the need to have a clear reference to all positive and negative externalities of the various food systems.*
- This would require agreeing on a typology of food systems, which is beyond the scope of this workstream.
- 21) *It was suggested that both the process and the policy recommendations should be people-centred and planet-sensitive.*
- Paragraph 14 refers to the aim of the policy recommendations, and includes several relevant points. Any changes to the text would need to be discussed and agreed during the policy recommendations process.
- 22) *It was suggested to update the figures on food insecurity based on the recently published SOFI 2020.*
- Paragraph 2 (footnote 3) does refer to data from SOFI 2020.
- 23) *It was suggested to emphasize the need for youth entrepreneurship.*
- Any changes to the text would have to be discussed and agreed during the policy negotiation process.
- 24) *It was suggested to make specific mention of women’s rights, worker’s rights and the collective rights of indigenous peoples;*
- Any changes to the text would have to be discussed and agreed during the policy negotiation process.

25) *Some stakeholders felt that specific policy recommendations on COVID-19 were missing.*

- Several recommendations relevant to COVID-19 were added to Draft One following the fifth informal discussion. However, as requested during the informal discussions, specific reference to COVID-19 was not made in the recommendations because the recommendations are not limited to the context of COVID-19, and may apply in contexts where new pandemics or other crises emerge.

26) *It was suggested to shorten the length of the preamble.*

- It was necessary to explain a number of important and sometimes sensitive issues in the preamble, in order to fully ground the policy recommendations that follow in a shared understanding of the context, and major findings of the HLPE report.

27) *It was suggested to integrate the Annex into the main body of the text.*

- This was considered during preparation of Draft 1, but would have increased the size of footnotes, making the text appear longer and more difficult to read.